Issue 217 11 May 1996

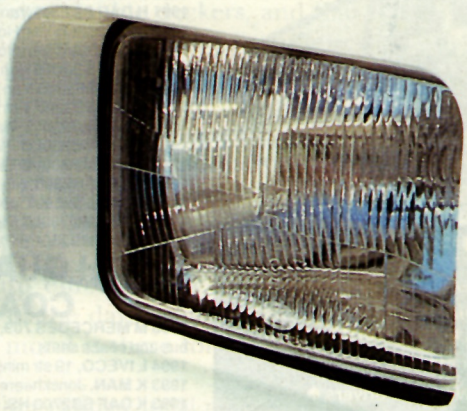
CBW

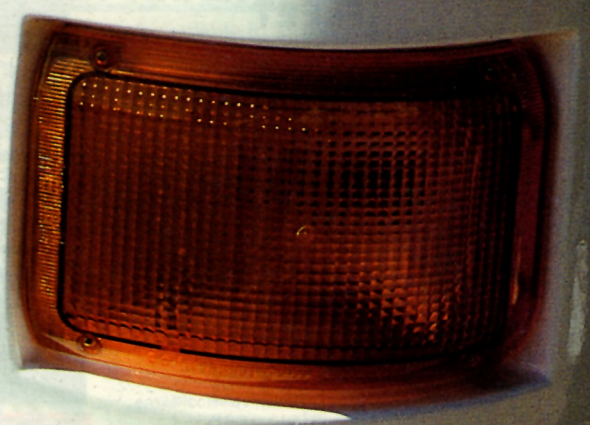
Coach and Bus Week

The PSV industry's news weekly

MEGA CAPACITY...

Tale of the century: Dennis decker holds a hundred





...MEGA LENGTH

Over-sized? Over-priced? Or over here? We look at the market for 15 metres

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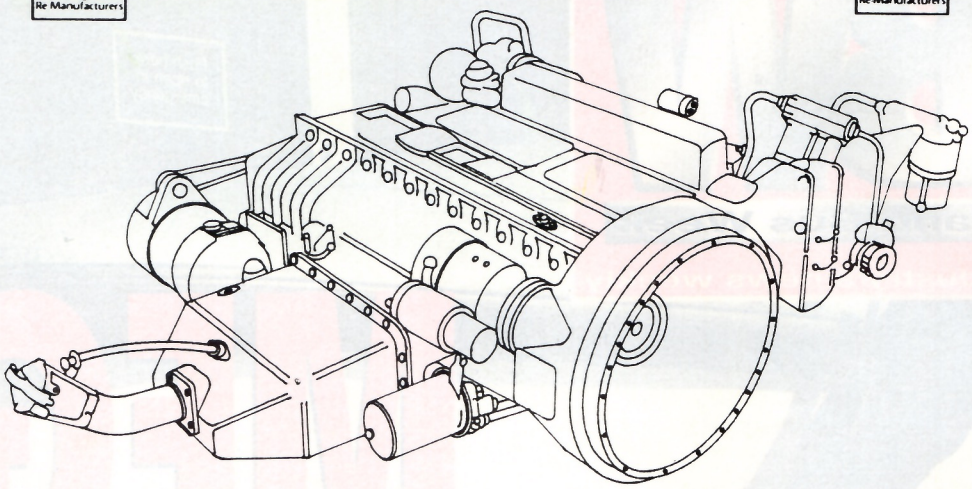

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1995 M DAF SB3000 WS Auto Van Hool Alizee 'H', 55R
1995 M DAF SB220 Auto Ikarus Citibus, 48 str
1995 M SB220 Auto, Northern Counties Paladin, 49 str bus
1994 L EOS 90 49R, toilet
1994 L DAF WS3000 Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF KS3000 Easishift Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF SB3000 Int Retarder, Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF HS2700 Auto Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1994 L MB230LT Auto Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF KS3000 Auto Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH'. 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF SB3000 Auto Van Hool Alizee 'H', 51R/Toilet
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1990 G MB230LB Van Hool Alizee 'H'
1990 G DAF SB3000 Van Hool 'SH', 49/Toilet
1989 F DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 53R
1989 F DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
1989 F DAF MB230LT Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet
1989 F DAF MB230LB Plaxton 3500, 53R
1989 F DAF MB230LB Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet
1988 E DAF SB2300 Van Hool Alizee, 51R/Toilet
1988 E DAF SB2300 Duple 340SL, 53R
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1991 J SETRA 215 HD 49R/Toilet
1990 G VOLVO B10M Plaxton 3500, 49R/Toilet
1990 G DAF DHTD Duple 320, 57R
1989 PP BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49R/Toilet
1989 SB3000 Plaxton 3500, 51/Toilet
1988 VOLVO B10M, Plaxton 3500, 49R/Toilet
1988 PP BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49R/Toilet
1988 E DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
1988 F SB3000 Van Hool Alizee SH, 49R/Toilet
1987 E SB2300 Plaxton 3200, 55R, air conditioned
1987 E DAF SB2300 Plaxton 3500, 53R, air conditioned
1987 D DAF SB2300 Van Hool Alizee 'H', 49R/Toilet
1987 D DAF SB230LB Duple 340, 53R
1987 D VAN HOOL T815, 51/Toilet
1986 C DAF MB200FL Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet
1986 C BOVA FUTURA FHD, 53R
1983 Y SCANIA K112 Jonckheere P50, 51R/Toilet
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Issue 217 11 May 1996

CBW

Coach and Bus Week

The PSV industry's news weekly

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AS we predicted last week, the school bus seatbelt controversy was well and truly stoked up last Tuesday after two double deckers collided on the borders of West Yorkshire, although there were no serious injuries.

When *CBW* went to press, information was sketchy, and descriptions of the accident by local media sources suggested there could have been many severe injuries. There was also the suggestion that, somehow, the lack of seatbelts on double deckers was a major contributory factor.

It soon became clear that the "40 or so casualties" involved only minor injuries but, like a dog with a bone, the local radio hacks insisted on turning the event into a major disaster and holding on-the-spot inquests into the whole policy of seatbelts on buses.

We know ourselves how sensitive the issue of school transport is, and we know from bitter experience how complicated the legislation is at present, and will be in the future. Predictably, the whole issue was trivialised by uninformed sources which carefully avoided bringing in industry spokesmen to explain the issues.

It was left to Pat Harris of BUSK, the Belt Up School Kids campaign, to explain to her interviewers how impracticable it is to fit belts to ageing double deckers, and that the real issue of school transport is not the competence of professional drivers and bus companies, but one of adult supervision on the buses themselves.

Nevertheless, in their quest to develop a drama out of the accident, local radio companies soon found parents who berated the Government for letting double deckers slip through the net of legislation. Local newspapers thankfully, did not drop down to this level.

Attempts to stoke up emotions by two rival radio stations failed by the end of the day, mainly because of the lack of casualties, but the moral is there for all operators to be wary of.

In their quest for higher ratings, local media will snatch at any school bus issue, so operators need to be on their guard and ready to respond to the hysterical rantings of individuals, and clearly present the real issues.

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events

15 May: Beyond PPG6 - A Mixed Future For Town Centre. Royal Town Planning Institute, Northern Branch all-dayer at Chester Le Street Civic Centre. Details on 0191 222 7812

15-17 May: Institute of Road Transport Engineers, IRTE 1996, Telford Exhibition Centre, Telford. Contact IRTE on 0171 630 1111, fax 0171 630 6677

21-23 May: Association of Local Bus Company Managers (ALBUM) 1996 Conference, Cavendish Hotel, Eastbourne. Trade stands available. Details from David Howard, secretary, Eastbourne Buses, Birch Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN23 6PD, tel 01323 721903, fax 01323 643034

23 May: CPT London & Home Counties Region annual Leeds Castle dinner. Details from Jim Carley, regional officer, London & Home Counties, on 0171 831 7546

31 May to 2 June: Avro Ex 96: 'Event of the Year for the vehicle recovery and breakdown industry'. Details on 01553 828686, fax 01553 828020

2 June: Leyland 100, Lancashire. Historic bus and truck rally. Exhibitor inquiries ONLY, contact Gordon Baron, c/o The British Commercial Vehicle Museum, King Street, Leyland, Preston PR5 1LE, tel: 01257 266036

3-6 June: ISATA European automotive development forum, Florence, Italy. Registration forms from ISATA, 42 Lloyd Park Avenue, Croydon CR0 5SB, tel 0181 681 30690, fax 0181 686 1490

5-6 June: Natural Gas Vehicle Association Bi-Ennial Conference & Exhibition, Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon. Details on 0171 388 7598, fax 0171 355 5099

6 June: Bus and Coach Wales Rally, Barry Island, South Glamorgan. Contact Cardiff Transport Preservation Group, 1 Tyn-y-Cae Grove, Cardiff CF4 6DB, tel 0374 158761

▼ Coach

European Express lau

Cityzap: first route from London Victoria is to Amsterdam via Le Shuttle, second heads for Paris

▼ Coach

Operators face changes in Belgian law

OPERATORS running coaches into and through Belgium are faced with two additional challenges - the Belgian authorities have imposed VAT on journeys and passengers are obliged to wear seatbelts where they are fitted.

Although the Confederation of Passenger Transport has "registered a strong protest", UK operators must pay VAT at a set amount on the distance travelled in Belgium.

Separate procedures exist for regular and ad hoc journeys but the first VAT declarations must be deposited with the Central VAT Office in Brussels before 31 July (for details tel +33 2 218 38 60 or fax +33 2 223 35 12).

Meanwhile, operators are recommended to ensure drivers tell passengers that seatbelts must be worn in Belgium if they are fitted to the coach.

▼ Coach and Bus

Flotation boosts pre-tax profits by 40 per cent

L GARDNER Group plc, the engineering group which includes engine manufacturer L Gardner & Sons among its two subsidiaries, has boosted pre-tax profits by 40 per cent since its Stock Exchange flotation last November.

Its first interim results show a profit of £1 million on a £10 million turnover during the six months up to the end of February.

The group expects continued growth.

nched

Eurolines undercut on times but not price

by Alan Millar

CITYZAP is the brand for a new European express coach service run by European Bus, a company headquartered in Amsterdam. First route from London undercuts Eurolines on time but not on price.

UK departures started last week with the timetable showing seven-hour trips to Amsterdam using Le Shuttle trains under the Channel.

It operates twice daily from London Victoria at 9am and 11.30pm.

Return fare of £55 compares with Eurolines £49 day return and £53 overnight return for a 12-hour journey which runs three times a day.

European Bus, which is based at Schipol airport, has a licence application for a London-Paris service but, having started more than six weeks ago, has other routes in Europe using coaches from De Jong of Ridderkerk in the Netherlands.

TBP in liquidation but production will continue until a buyer is found

▼ Coach and Bus

Receivers move in

TBP, the Birmingham-based manufacturer of bodywork for minibuses, is in receivership. The company's bodybuilding activities continue to operate as receivers KPMG continue their search for a buyer.

Peter Kitt, regional manager for sales of the tri-axle-based minibuses, has left the company.

Mark Hopton from KPMG Corporate Recovery, one of the joint receivers, said: "Considerable energy is being devoted to finding a buyer for the business. Discussions with interested parties who have come forward so far are only at a very early stage. In the meantime, TBP's business is continuing."

TBP acquired the rights to build the former Peugeot-Talbot tri-axle Freeway which sold in modest numbers to PSV operators as a wheelchair-accessible small bus. Its latest development of the tri-axle theme, Freeway II based on Peugeot Boxer, was launched at the Crowthorne mobility show last Summer.

The 'hump-back' Freeway II was heralded as a radical new concept with single step entry. It has rear concealed underfloor lift. A minibus body for Mercedes-Benz chassis/cowl is also built.

▼ Coach

Competition beats Evans

NEW Tredegar-based Evans Coaches, one of the longest established coach businesses in South Wales, is to go into liquidation because it can no longer live with the competition.

Rate cutting by other operators is thought to be the main cause of the collapse of the firm, which was started nearly 80 years ago. Company directors Harold and Ian Evans, whose grandfather founded the business after the end of the First World War, are putting the company into voluntary liquidation.

Evans Coaches used to have as many as 20 vehicles on the road and give service to schools in the valleys and to other events. Now they are down to six employees and two vehicles.

The company's school runs have been taken over by Cled Williams of Bargoed.

▼ Coach and Bus

No MMC inquiry

ACQUISITION of County Bus Holdings Ltd by the National Express Group plc will not be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

▼ Bus

Oxford cuts congestion

ATTEMPTS by Oxfordshire County Council to reduce the number of buses in Oxford's Cornmarket Street have at last borne fruit.

Three months after an original meeting, Thames Transit has agreed to re-routeings and Oxford Bus Company has confirmed changes to its services.

The changes will mean a net reduction of 17 buses per hour.

▼ Coach

TE now goes to Disneyland

TRANSYLVANIA Express, the East Dulwich coach company which has run a weekly express service to Slovakia for three years, has added Disneyland Paris to its itinerary.

Starting this month, the overnight service departs three nights a week from the Green Line coach station near London Victoria at 11.30pm.

Fares, including entry to the Disneyland park, are £49 per adult and £39 per child.

Up to three vehicles are dedicated to the service, which runs Monday, Wednesday and Friday, arriving at 6.30am the next morning. Return is same day 15 mins after park closure. Single and double-deck Setras have special Disneyland vinyls.

Transylvanian says the service follows five months research of the market.

In addition to the company's own sales outlets, Green Line is sole agent for the service.

CBW

In brief

Soccer work

LEEDS City Link - Goldrider at Bramley Garage; Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach company; DOIGS of Glasgow; Mainline Group; and Kestrel Coaches of Clowne have been awarded contracts by Demauris Associates to transport more than 500 young soccer players taking part in the Nike Premier World Cup final in Huddersfield.

Q Drive move

Q DRIVE Holdings and its subsidiaries' head office has moved to Waterford House, Erftstadt Court, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 2YF. While the registered offices of AVE Berkhof (Alder Valley Engineering) and Limebourne Travel (Q Drive Coaches Ltd) have also been relocated to this address, their trading activities continue to be based at Bracknell and Battersea without change.

'Roads better'

THE condition of trunk roads has improved since the mid 1980s, while the condition of local roads has remained fairly steady. So says the report of the 1995 National Road Maintenance Condition Survey (NRMCS), which has just been published by the DoT's Government Statistical Service. Details on 0171 271 4800.

Kew numbers

KEW cleaning has asked us to point out that its phone and fax numbers were incorrect in the vehicle cleaning feature (CBW, 27 April). The correct numbers are tel 01768 865777, fax 01768 864713. Our apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Vultron coup

VULTRON International has supplied and installed a major passenger information display system for West Yorkshire PTA and METRO at the new Leeds city bus station.

▼ Coach

Three-for-two change starts

UK out on a limb with its seatbelt rules for school transport

By Mike Morgan

THIS month marks the end of the three-for-two concession on seats fitted with seatbelts, putting operators and local authorities in the firing line from two sides of a conflict. While safety activists demand seatbelts, there are financial constraints forced by increasing pressure on budgets.

Although the long-running on-off seatbelt saga has at long last been reconciled, compulsory seatbelts on European coaches and minibuses are still more than three years away, leaving the UK out on a limb with its seatbelt rules for school transport.

As first revealed in *CBW*, the Euro rules will not require retrofit, unlike regulations affecting operators in the UK which are causing consternation throughout the industry.

No three-for-two on belted school bus seats

The EU will require lap belts on all coach seats except those classified as exposed, where three-point will be fitted. Midicoaches can have either type depending on seat design and minicoaches must have three-point. The deadlines are 1 October 1997 for new vehicle designs and two years later for existing designs. Mini-sized vehicles have a further two years to comply (*CBW*, 27 April).

Europe insists on seatbelts in all coaches and minibuses regardless of use. The UK regs come into effect on 10 February 1997 for post 1988 vehicles and 12 months later for anything older. They refer only to vehicles used specifically to carry schoolchildren.

Surrey study

A SURREY County Council commissioned study is to assess benefits and problems bus operators have experienced when introducing seatbelts on buses used for schools. Since September 1995 Surrey County Council has insisted all new and retendered school bus services have fitted seatbelts.

The study will consider costs to operators, any difficulties conforming to the C&U regulations, number of passengers wearing belts, vandalism, maintenance and benefits the operators have found.

Norfolk to charge

NORFOLK County Council is to charge parents £45 per term for discretionary seats on school buses from next term, when it abandons the three-for-two seating policy in rural East Anglia.

Recognising the subsequent loss of capacity, Norfolk CC adopted a high-profile public consultation exercise, produced a leaflet explaining the new seatbelt legislation and putting forward three policy options:

- To continue the existing policy
- Deliberately have spare seats and make them available at their full cost
- Maintain a number of spare seats and make them available in the first instance at a subsidised charge for pupils who live within half a mile of Norfolk walking distances

Leaflets went to 1,686 parents, including all the parents of pupils using spare seats on a paid or free basis, and to 400 parents of pupils currently not using transport at all. Response rate was 33.3 per cent and 74 per cent of parents voted for charging for seats at a subsidised rate.

BUSK invite

SOUTH Lanarkshire Council, one of Scotland's newly-formed unitary authorities, has invited the Belt Up School Kids (BUSK) campaign to advise on specifications for school bus contracts and road safety measures.

Kent package

KENT County Council is introducing a package of measures to ensure socially-essential bus services are kept running to boost public transport. In the package is a plan to develop new bus services for school children not entitled to free travel.

'Market rapidly moving towards low-floor'

▼ Bus

Pointing the way

PLAXTON'S low-floor Pointer has now notched up 350 orders in just six months from its launch at Coach & Bus 95 last October, making it Britain's best-selling accessible bus, and one of the fastest-selling new vehicles in Plaxton's history.

"The low-floor Pointer has demonstrated there is a strong demand for an affordable accessible bus," says David Quainton, Plaxton's sales director. "The market is rapidly moving towards low-floor — as we forecasted it would — and the Pointer has won more orders than any other type of low-floor vehicle." Delivery of low-floor Pointers is now under way, with some of the first being delivered to British Bus and FirstBus subsidiaries, and even to bus operators in Hong Kong.

One small step...

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▼ Coach

TCA probes EU directive

THE Coach Association (TCA) has published a guide to the forthcoming European Union Directive on Bus & Coach Construction. The guide has been compiled in association with a technical consultant in Brussels.

The draft directive is said to amount to almost 100 pages. Although the EU's proposals are likely to have a major impact on the detail of coach construction, particularly with accessibility and safety standards in mind, the directive is unlikely to become mandatory before the year 2001.

A TCA spokesman said: "We have sent out this document to our membership and it is likely to prove of great use to the industry.

"The document analyses carefully what the likely effects on the coach industry would be of the proposals in the draft document of the EU Directive on Bus & Coach Construction.

"We are pursuing this so we can best advise our members on the effects on coaches of new legislation coming out of Brussels."

CBW will be examining the proposals in detail as they become available.

▼ Bus

Brave approach pays dividends

THE popularity of movie blockbuster *Braveheart* is paying dividends for Wilson of Bonnyrigg.

The Lothian coach firm has received an excellent response to its William Wallace Braveheart tour, which leaves from Edinburgh and takes in prominent locations from the Wars of Independence. A tour commentary is provided by the company's own driver/couriers.

The service will run throughout the Summer.

▼ Bus

Alexander's £1m boost

New investment in manufacturing

By Mike Morgan

ALEXANDER, the UK's leading bus bodybuilder, has invested £1 million to extend its computer-controlled production facilities.

The investment, at the company's base in Falkirk, Scotland, was made to generate short and long-term customer benefits and effectively makes Alexander one of the world's most technically advanced bus bodybuilders.

The manufacturing revolution taking place in Falkirk will give Alexander immediate benefits in increased production capacity and flexibility. It will also enable bus operators to reduce downtime by helping them source, acquire and fit high-quality spares faster.

The latest state-of-the-art technology will enhance the company's design capability, increasing its ability to build vehicles that meet customer operating requirements precisely. The investment, which comes less than a year after the acquisition of Alexander by The Mayflower Corporation, is designed to complement the existing manufacturing technology in place at Falkirk.

It includes two CNC Unisign 3-D workstations linked to a Kasto automatic storage and retrieval system, for the automatic processing of the specialised structural aluminium extrusions used by Alexander in the construction of bus bodies.

An existing CAD/CAM system already caters for flat and folded materials and the addition of the new machinery has resulted in a totally controlled manufacturing environment for the production of all key structural components. The workstations are based around a Unisign Univers 5 travelling column vertical machining centre capable of manipulating, machining and sawing operations.

"Increased parts quality, production flexibility and reduced processing costs were the primary targets for this project," said Alexander Falkirk md Bill Cameron.

Hi-tech: state-of-the-art technology at Falkirk

Leeds City Link md Ray O'Toole, MP Derek Fatchett and FirstBus chairman Trevor Smallwood at the opening of the new depot

▼ Bus

Investment 'policy'

FIRSTBUS chairman Trevor Smallwood emphasised that new investment was a cornerstone of group policy, as he officiated at the opening of subsidiary Leeds City Link's new Cherry Row depot.

"We invested over £50 million in new vehicles last year, expect to spend in excess of £30 million this year, and this is the fourth new depot to be built since 1986," he said. "This is just one example of how we see the business developing."

LCL's new £1.5 million facility takes over from Torre Road depot, opened 59 years ago and in its time the largest tram and bus depot in the north. The old depot will now be demolished.

▼ Coach

MacEwan's wins valuable contract

A VALUABLE transport contract linking the south of Scotland with north-west England is set to change hands at the start of June.

MacEwan's Coaches of Dumfries has won the tender to run the service between Galashiels and Carlisle, taking over from FirstBus subsidiary Lowland Omnibuses.

The 64-mile route currently attracts around 110,000 passengers a year and an annual council subsidy approaching £78,000.

The contract requires that, within the first year, the service must be operated with low-step vehicles registered after December 1994.

MacEwan's Coaches founder John MacEwan says he believes there is potential for a significant increase in passenger numbers on the 82 weekly journeys.

MacEwan's: now has Galashiels-Carlisle run

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London & Country one of first to order Arrows

Targeting a ton

ROGER Heard, Dennis bus and coach sales director, has a target to sell 100 Dennis Arrow double decks in its first year of production and has already committed the Guildford plant to build 38 chassis.

Operators placing orders from the drawing board include Nottingham City Transport, which has taken delivery of its first batch of two and ordered a second two, British Bus group operator London & Country with 10, Aintree Coaches with one; and Waveney Playbus with what will probably prove to be this year's most expensive playbus.

▼ Bus

Tale of the century: Dennis fits in a 100

New Arrow decker can seat 84 with 16 standees

By Mike Morgan

WITH its new £110,000 double decker, Dennis has cracked the 100-passenger barrier.

Speaking at last week's official launch of the Cummins C-series-powered chassis derived from the single-deck Lance, sales director Roger Heard said bodybuilders could successfully complete a vehicle seating 84 with 16 standees.

Christened the Arrow to give separate identity to a new range of double deckers replacing the long-running Dominator, the new decker shares the Lance's front and rear modules.

Driveline comprises 245 bhp C-series driving in line through ZF four or five-speed automatic gearbox to beefed-up Rockwell rear axle.

Suspension mods, to take account of the double decker's tilt requirements and riding characteristics, differentiate the Lance from the Arrow.

Mr Heard revealed that an Allison 'world-series' gearbox undergoing test in a London & Country Lance, could become an option on the Arrow, offering a cost saving of around £1,700.

Air-conditioning could be fitted but, given the UK limit on rear axle loadings, would affect passenger capacity until the derogation is removed in 1999.

Decker can take different seat permutations

THREE of the first Dennis Arrows demonstrate how the new decker can accommodate different permutations of seating to meet operators' requirements.

The show vehicle for Nottingham City Transport, which was displayed at on the Dennis stand at Coach & Bus 95, has Northern Counties Palatine II body and weighs in at 10,910kg.

It seats 80 passengers in all-forward-facing high-back seats and comes complete with coach-style panelled-over rear which has been used to display a mural depicting Nottingham Castle. With 44 seated upstairs, 36 downstairs and 11 standees its total capacity is 91.

Horses for courses: the Arrow's capacity varies with the interior design

East Lancs is completing a batch of Arrows for British Bus subsidiary London & Country. Some have coach-style seating with back-to-back specified at the rear of the lower saloon. Its seating capacity is reduced to 76 (45 upstairs and 31 downstairs).

Eleven standees bring total capacity to 87. Unladen weight is 10,400 kg.

Dennis has commissioned a Northern Counties-bodied Arrow to demonstrate to operators.

This is the lightest of the three at 10,280 kg and, with its bus-type seating, reaches the Arrow's maximum seating capacity of 84.

● *CBW* **editor Mike Morgan was the first journalist to test drive the Arrow. To see how this 95-passenger decker performs see pages 24-26**

▼ Coach and Bus

Makers sign engines deal

ENGINE manufacturers Cummins, Iveco and New Holland have signed a multi-million pound tri-partite agreement to design and build the next generation of engines to meet Euro 3 emissions standards for 1999 and beyond.

Design facilities are expected to be located in the UK and the engine plant will be built in Italy

Planned output exceeds 200,000 engines per year of which 50 per cent will be installed in New Holland's agricultural and construction equipment. Iveco and Cummins will take 25 per cent each for coach, bus and truck applications.

Engines will be one-litre per cylinder designs with power outputs ranging from 50-275 bhp.

While offering economies of scale to all three manufacturers, Cummins expects to strengthen its position in Europe. Its Darlington plant will build the new-generation engine.

▼ Bus

Low-floor boost

WEST Midlands Travel has boosted its investment in low-floor buses to over £20 million in less than a year.

Birmingham-based WMT has ordered 50 Volvo B6LEs bodied by Wrights of Ballymena to replace a similar number of 15-year-old vehicles on routes in and around the city. Delivery starts in July with completion by the year end.

The B6LEs will join 150 B10B and B10Ls ordered in 1995, which are progressively entering service. It has an option to purchase a further 150 B10Ls...

On course for '96: Dennis hoping for £16m profit

▼ Coach and Bus

Looking to beat the record again

Turnover of £208 million being forecast

By Noel Millier

DENNIS Specialist Vehicles had its best year ever in 1995 and expects 1996 to beat this record again. In fact the last time more vehicles carrying the Dennis name were produced was in 1918 when lorries were in demand,

Dennis managing director John Smith is forecasting a turnover of £208 million and a profit of around £16 million from the Guildford bus and fire plant this year with a target over 1,700 chassis and over 200 chassis kits for export.

This compares with a turnover of £80 million and a profit of £3.4 million in 1992 which has been rising steadily to the 1995 all-time high of £163 million turnover and £13.1 million profit. The rise in the fortunes of the Trinity Group manufacturer has in part been due to the phenomenal success of its Dennis Dart.

Initial reaction to the Dart SLF suggests that Dennis is hanging on to its niche despite heavy competition on a number of fronts. Dennis already has an order book of 500 Dart SLFs and has export orders form Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. Mr Smith also reported success in Malaysia where Dennis produced around 100 chassis last year, although he admitted some industry analysts had expected it to do more there.

Another major boost to Dennis fortunes is the order for 184 left-hand drive Javelins for the Ryder organisation won in a round of Europe-wide competitive tendering. They are to be bodied by UVG and used by the MOD in Germany.

CBW

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▼ Maintenance

No additional vehicle

A PRIVATE hire car operator's bid to add a second minibus to his restricted O-licence was turned down by Eastern traffic commissioner Brigadier Compton Boyd at a Cambridge public inquiry.

In addition, the commissioner warned Ashgar Ali, of 26 Chippendale Close, High Wycombe, Bucks, about his future maintenance standards.

DoT vehicle examiner Cyril Payne said he had carried out a maintenance investigation in January. He was unable to examine the vehicle as it was under repair on axle stands at the time and he was not prepared to get underneath it.

There were no maintenance records available. There were no documented driver defect reports. Mr Ali, as the only driver, had felt at the time he did not need to make out defect reports. He had not been very clear about what was required in relation to vehicle maintenance and, on advice, he had purchased the DoT's Guide to Maintenance.

The commissioner said it was sensible for an operator, with one vehicle or 50, to have a written defect reporting system, as it was the only way the operator could prove to the Vehicle Inspectorate he had a system to show defects were being reported and rectified.

Mr Payne said that, when he visited Mr Ali again in April, Mr Ali produced inspection sheets confirming the vehicle was now being inspected every six weeks. No mileages were entered and no defects were noted on the sheets. However, they had been signed off as showing the vehicle was fit for the road by the commercial garage undertaking the work.

Brigadier Boyd said it was unusual for no defects to be found on a 1985 vehicle but Mr Payne said he had found no defects when he examined the vehicle in April. Mr Ali appeared to have put his house in order in regard to the inspection periods, but he still needed to chase the contractor to fill in the forms properly.

Mr Ali said he was now using defect report forms. Asked why there had been no defect reports since he was given the advice by the vehicle examiner in January, Mr Ali said nothing had gone wrong with the vehicle.

There were, therefore, grounds for considering revoking or suspending the licence. However, on the credit side Mr Ali had been pretty frank about the whole business and he now appeared to be on the right lines

There had been no inspection records because he had not been doing anything with the vehicle at the time. He agreed the vehicle had been taxed and could have been used. He had not known he had to keep inspection records for 15 months.

Brigadier Boyd said he would never have given Mr Ali a licence if he had known he was unaware of his responsibilities. When the licence was issued in March 1995 Mr Ali had stated the vehicle would be inspected every three months. In February he had signed a contract with a commercial garage for inspections to take place every six weeks.

Mr Ali said he had reduced the period between inspections after talking to another operator.

Mr Payne said that, provided that Mr Ali stuck to the maintenance arrangements he now had, and read the inspection reports, he did not see any problem over him operating two vehicles.

Mr Ali said: "All I can do is apologise for the period gone. I have been learning day by day." Brigadier Boyd said they were talking about road safety and it was not good enough for an operator to pick things up as he went along. Two things were pretty clear. Mr Ali had not had the vehicle regularly inspected, or been able to demonstrate he had; and he did not have a proper driver defect reporting system in place.

There were, therefore, grounds for considering revoking or suspending the licence. However, on the credit side Mr Ali had been pretty frank about the whole business and he now appeared to be on the right lines.

There had been nothing wrong with the vehicle when it was seen by the vehicle examiner. Consequently, he was not going to revoke or suspend the licence. He was not, however, satisfied Mr Ali was fit to have a second vehicle at the moment, but he thought he would be sooner rather than later. The way things were going, he thought Mr Ali might well be successful if he re-applied for a second vehicle some time in the near future.

▼ Maintenance

Wheel loss

But commiss

THE loss of a pair of wheels from a coach carrying 30 school children resulted in the appearance of coach operator Gregory Day at a Cheltenham disciplinary inquiry before Western deputy traffic commissioner John Robins.

Mr Day, who trades as Greg's Travel, of Unit 44D, Nailsworth Mills Estate, Avening, Nailsworth, Stroud, Gloucestershire, holds a three-vehicle O-licence.

DoT vehicle examiner Andrew Tudor said an immediate prohibition endorsed as showing a significant maintenance failure was imposed after he had examined the coach concerned during an accident investigation. Both the rear nearside wheels were missing.

The wheelnuts had become loose and had wound off. The fact the wheelnuts were loose should have been found during routine maintenance or the driver's daily checks.

As a result of that incident, he carried out a maintenance investigation in December, examining two minibuses and issuing one delayed prohibition and two defect notices. The vehicles were inspected every 12 weeks by two commercial garages, one for the minibuses and one for the coach.

The delayed prohibition was imposed because of excessive movement between spring eye bushes and shackle pins. He endorsed the prohibition as showing a maintenance failure because, though the defects had been noted on the September inspection record, no mention was made of them on the November record. The prohibition was subsequently varied for a further three defects when the minibus concerned was produced for clearance.

Mr Tudor said the coach that lost its wheels was carrying 30 school children at the time. He had no knowledge of anyone being injured. There was no evidence of any of the studs having sheered. The wheelnuts had just wound themselves off.

'The fact the wheelnuts w

If the vehicle had been inspected that morning, it should have been obvious to the driver the wheelnuts were loose. The coach had only travelled a small distance, not a 100 miles or so.

However, Mr Day said he did not accept the wheelnuts were loose at the start of the day. His father, Leslie Day, said they had a daily nil driver defect reporting system. The part-time driver who did the early school run had signed to say he had checked the coach visually on the morning of the accident.

leads to disciplinary inquiry

oner decides operator not to blame for accident

re loose should have been found during the drivers' daily checks' - examiner

by Michael Jewell

Though it was appreciated it was dark at that time of the year, their drivers were provided with torches to enable them to carry out their checks. The accident happened on the Monday morning and the bus had been driven by his son on the Saturday.

His son had checked it over and it had been all right then. Gregory Day said the coach had been into the commercial garage two weeks previously after the driver had reported brake problems. A month earlier the coach had gone into ATS and all the wheels had been removed.

New tyres were put on the front and the rear tyres were re-grooved. When the work was completed the fitter had air-gunned the wheelnuts up. He found out later the fitter had not used a torque wrench. The following day the coach had gone into the commercial garage for a full service and they had said they had not removed any of the wheels.

Leslie Day said his son had run minibuses for some years and they had only purchased the coach last year. They had spent an awful lot of money on it. It had been a very unfortunate incident and they were just happy no-one was injured. It was a complete and utter mystery how it had happened. It certainly was not due to a lack of maintenance.

Mr Tudor said it was not possible for the wheels to have come off in that short distance if the wheelnuts had been tight. Mr Day used a bar to check the wheelnuts on Saturdays, not a torque wrench, and the bar was insufficient to check whether the wheelnuts were torqued up properly or not.

Leslie Day said the bar was provided by the manufacturers of the coach. This was the first time they had a large vehicle. The vehicle examiner had said that type of wheelnut, which tightened clockwise, could very easily come off. There was no damage to the studs, so it was not a case where the wheels had been wobbling around for a long time due to a lack of maintenance.

All the wheelnuts had now been replaced with a safer double-locking type. The coach now went into ATS every fortnight for the wheels to be checked with a torque wrench.

The delayed prohibition was completely his fault. His son was on holiday and he had presumed the work had been carried out by the commercial garage. When the vehicle went in again in November, the garage did not note the defects again.

The whole matter arose when they were in the process of purchasing the large vehicle, making parking arrangements for it and changing offices. Their own garage was unable to do the work so they used a different garage to do the repairs which did not carry them out properly. Everyone could make mistakes, as was evidenced by the fact the latter garage found a defect that had been missed by the vehicle examiner.

Taking no action other than to issue a formal warning, Mr Robins said the safety of passengers was of paramount importance. Unfortunately, accidents could happen. However, he was satisfied the accident that occurred was not due to a failure to maintain the vehicle.

Consequently, he did not propose to take disciplinary action. It was clear Mr Day had not realised the wheelnuts needed torqueing but, after the accident, he took immediate steps to prevent any recurrence. It was fortunate no-one was killed or injured but he did not lay the blame at Mr Day's door.

It had been freely admitted the delayed prohibition was due to an oversight and he was going to issue a formal warning in relation to that. Mr Day needed to check the inspection records from the contractor very carefully, and check the work had been done and recorded. Mr Day had not been operating for very long. This was his first blemish and he hoped it would be his last.

The deputy commissioner said drivers could drop an operator in it by just walking round their vehicles and ticking everything so there was a need to carry out spot checks. Leslie Day said that was already being done.

▼ Legal

Driver stole fuel from employer

A COACH driver who was caught stealing fuel from his employer, Hurst's Coaches, of Wigan, has been given a conditional discharge for 12 months by Wigan Magistrates.

Graham Finch, of Windleshaw Street, Lower Ince, Wigan, Greater Manchester, pleaded guilty to the theft of the fuel, worth £100, in February.

Prosecuting, Diana Copper said the management of Hurst's Coaches, of Warrington Road, Goose Green, Wigan, became suspicious that Mr Finch might be stealing fuel. They consequently set up an all-night vigil with a video camera, and caught him stealing on film. Mr Finch was filmed filling up drums with 40 gallons of diesel.

Mr Finch said the theft had now cost him his job. The magistrates ordered him to pay £45 prosecution costs.

▼ Europe

Port and Spain

NEW tour opportunities to Spain and Portugal are available to operators in the 1997 season from Botel, the Rotherham-based wholesaler.

One itinerary is themed on rural Portugal and is based in Amarante, some 40 miles inland from Oporto. Another destination is the resort of Vila Praia de Ancora, which is quieter than its larger neighbour, Viana de Castelo. As on the Amarante tour, a trip to a port wine cellar in Oporto is included.

In Spain, the unspoilt region of Galicia, in the north-west, is featured in a special itinerary centred on the resort of Sangenjo, which is about 15 miles from Pontevedra.

A tour of Cantabrica is based in Santillana, a very pretty small town, and the itinerary includes an excursion to the valleys and narrow gorges of the Picos de Europa mountain range.

Ferry travel is via the P&O European Ferries route between Portsmouth and Bilbao and accommodation is in good, three-star hotels.

For more details contact Botel Services on 01709 703535 (fax 01703 703525).

▼ Europe

Sunshine sav

Shearings doubles capacity on European budget h

by William Golden

THE popularity of its budget European Supersavers programme has prompted Shearings Holidays to double capacity to 14,000 in a new brochure. New destinations include Paris, the Rhine and Rome and Sorrento, plus Austria and Poland.

Under the programme, customers choose the resort and the operator selects the hotel. Since the launch of the programme last Autumn, Shearings has sold more than 4,000 seats, leading the company to consider including Supersavers in its UK programme.

The success of the budget holidays follows increased demand for Shearings' European Sunshine Express programme, which led to capacity being increased by 50 per cent to 20,000 earlier this year. Customers choose both the hotel and resort in this programme, making holidays more expensive than Supersavers.

● Bookings for the failed

▼ UK

Shuttle executive goes

PHILIPPA Harris, Le Shuttle's UK marketing director, has left Eurotunnel after five years in the job, during which she had been closely involved in the promotion of the car service through the Channel Tunnel.

Until a replacement is found, her Le Shuttle duties will be taken over by Bill Dix, chief commercial manager.

The departure of Ms Harris is the latest in a line by senior management at Eurotunnel in the last 14 months, including former commercial director Christopher Garnett and sales and marketing director Neil Cooper.

▼ UK

Getting in the ro

A SUBSTANTIAL increase in visitor numbers to Sandringham, The Queen's Norfolk residence, is expected this Summer prompted by celebration for Her Majesty's 70th birthday.

To mark the occasion, the Sandringham Estate has produced a new 48-page colour souvenir guidebook, featuring on the cover a photograph taken of The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in Sandringham House at Christmas.

Sandringham House is open daily from 11am to 4.45pm until 22 July, and then at the same times from 8 August to 6 October. The museum and grounds are open daily until 27 July and from 7 August to 6 October. They then are open at weekends until the end of Octo-

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ings

liday programme

coach holiday specialist, Travel Guide Reader Holidays, have been taken over by Middlesbrough operator, Siesta Travel Europe. Travel Guide, which was based in Tyneside, had its ABTA membership terminated in early April after failing to supply accounts.

yal picture

ber. Admission to the house, museum and grounds is £4 for adults, £3 for senior citizens and £2 for children from five to 15.

Parties of 20 or more paying customers qualify for group rates if they pay in full one month in advance. Private after-hours tours are by arrangement.

For more details contact the Public Access Manager on 01553 772675 (fax 01485 541571)

Flying the flag: Alan Hockridge, chairman of North Somerset's marketing and leisure committee, celebrates winning the Tidy Britain award with local youngsters Joanne Bale (left), and Claire and Ryan Kemp

▼ UK

Coach-friendly resort cleans up

A NEW groups guide to Weston-super-Mare has been launched by tourism officials hoping to clean up in the coach market.

It highlights the town's top attractions, including the new Sea Life Centre, and lists hotels and restaurants and cafes offering special deals.

And to underline its reputation as a clean and safe family resort, Weston's beach has won the Tidy Britain's Group Seaside Award for the second year running.

Special events in Weston-super-Mare this Summer include Weston Super Heliday, on 27 and 28 July, when up to 50 military and civilian helicopters will be on display, enabling visitors to take flights around the bay. The annual flower show will be held from 16-18 August.

The opening of the town's M5 link road last Summer has cut coach journey times to the resort.

For example, journeys from Birmingham take about two hours - traffic jams permitting - and those from Manchester about three-and-a-half hours. CBW

Eurowatch

WEATHER

City	Average temperature last week	City	Average temperature last week
Athens	21C/70F	Madrid	15C/59F
Amsterdam	18C/64F	Oslo	10F/50F
Berlin	16C/61F	Paris	14C/57F
Brussels	13C/55F	Rome	18C/64F
Dublin	7C/45F	Stockholm	11C/52F
Lisbon	17C/63F	Vienna	17C/63F
Luxembourg	12C/54F	Zurich	16C/61F

DIESEL PRICES

(Courtesy AA Roadwatch)

Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling	Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling
Austria	0.56	Luxembourg	0.46
Belgium	0.56	Netherlands	0.56
Eire	0.58	Norway	0.75
France	0.54	Portugal	0.47
Germany	0.50	Spain	0.48
Greece	0.43	Sweden	0.65
Italy	0.59	Switzerland	0.66

HOLIDAY POUND

Country	Currency exchange rate	Country	Currency exchange rate
Austria	15.73 Sch/£	Italy	2,305 Lire/£
Belgium	45.90 BFr/£	Netherlands	2.50 Gld/£
Denmark	8.66 K/£	Norway	9.65 NKr/£
Eire	0.94 Punt/£	Portugal	230 Es/£
France	7.53 F/£	Spain	185 Pta/£
Germany	2.23 DM/£	Sweden	10.09 SKr/£
Greece	358 D/£	Switzerland	1.80 SFr/£

Is this a fair way to dispense justice?

TWO weeks ago I outlined how, by the early 1980s, traffic commissioners had gained a power to impose various sorts of penalty — a big change from their earlier role of simply regulating passenger journeys.

At that stage the penalty aspect was quite subtle, but the Transport Act 1985 introduced two measures biased towards sanction rather than control. Section 26 gave the power to ban operators from operating local services if they had not complied with registered details, or had operated dangerously. Section 111, with its ability to order repayment of 20 per cent of fuel duty rebate received over a three-month period was a watershed. For this is an actual financial penalty of almost unlimited magnitude.

Both of these new penalties were (and remain) wholly or mainly about punishment and retribution for past wrongdoings. They are not in the mould of the erstwhile commissioners' role — of just restricting what operators can safely do having regard to their capabilities, resources and facilities. No, an operator could be working well within his capabilities, but doing so dangerously for competitive reasons, and be punished for this misdemeanour.

Likewise, commercial pressures (or even lack of meaningful enforcement against the real offenders) could cause an otherwise capable and responsible operator to deviate from the paths of righteousness. For that he could be 'fined' by being made to repay fuel duty rebate.

It is the change last 1 January to continuous operator licensing that has brought the punitive role of commissioners into focus.

The commissioners' power to prematurely terminate licences no longer exists. In its place, as many anticipated, commissioners are now frequently resorting to the suspension of licences. This power has long been in their armoury, but rarely used in the past. Premature termination was seen (by them at least) as far more effective to put a black mark on an operator's record with the added merit of making the operator demonstrate that he could safely jump through the hoop of fleet inspection and perhaps a public inquiry to renew the licence.

Suspension is very much a two-edged sword. If, for example, an operator who had previously had a good track record suddenly has a disastrous number of prohibitions and claims it is because the fleet engineer has left and he is doing the best he can until a replacement is recruited, the licence might be suspended, in whole or in part, until the new fleet engineer is in place and able to run the show correctly.

In this manner suspension can be used as a control measure. But, say you were a traffic commissioner faced with an operator whose finances were OK and an impeccable maintenance record, so there was no justification to reduce the licensed fleet size whatsoever, but there had been some convictions for tachograph offences — not of a scale that would be sufficient to damage good repute and thus make revocation unavoidable, yet enough to justify the belief the operator had breached the promise to operate within the law, which had been given to obtain the licence.

What action would you take? The answer may well be to suspend the licence for a few days. This puts a black mark on the record and may actually impose a quite a severe financial penalty. "Penalty" is indeed the word. For the commissioner, in this case, has donned the mantle of the magistrate and is imposing nothing more or less than a punishment in the hope it will persuade the miscreant to mend his ways. It has taken a long trawl through history to get to this point — a point far removed from the commissioners' original function.

Now I did say it caused me concern. I hasten to correct any supposition that I think traffic commissioners are acting improperly. My concern is that we all seem to have reached this stage without recognising the fact this shift has happened, and the possible consequences of it.

What possible consequences? Firstly, magistrates, sheriffs, recorders and judges are trained to sentence fairly and properly. The range of parameters of punitive sanctions available are normally defined by statute and there are recognised tariffs according to the degree of misdemeanour. It is, after all, only fair that, in similar circumstances, a person should receive virtually the same sentence for a given offence, whether he is tried in London, Aberdeen or Truro. Because of the way the use of sanctions by traffic commissioners has evolved, I have reservations whether defaulting operators can expect the same degree of consistency in their punishments as that enjoyed by criminals.

Secondly (and it is a point I mentioned earlier), up to the present there has been no requirement for traffic commissions to apportion their decision between control measures and sanctions.

Thirdly, the conduct of public inquiries in relation to the discovery of evidence is far more relaxed than in criminal proceedings, yet the true scale of penalties which could be imposed is infinitely variable and almost unlimited. Do commissioners, for example, have any idea what even one day's suspension could cost an operator after adding up the continuing overheads, the cost of hiring in and the loss of earnings? My guess is that it could range from something fairly negligible for an elderly fleet suspended for a Sunday in Winter to, perhaps, £500 per vehicle day for a weekday in June in a quality fleet.

But my greatest concern is that a smart lawyer with a determination to pursue a suitable appeal against sanctions could bring the whole enforcement system into question. My thinking is thus: it is a fundamental principle of British justice that a man cannot be tried twice for the same offence. Many operators who have been subject to disciplinary measures at the hands of the traffic commissioner have, in the past, advanced this "double punishment" argument on appeal to the Transport Tribunal.

Such appeals have, to date, been dismissed on the basis that while, say, a conviction for using vehicles with defective brakes is an offence in criminal law terms, this does not prevent a traffic commissioner reducing the operator's number of authorised vehicles because of the same information (or even revoking the licence in total) because this is not a 'penalty' as such. It is part of the proper 'control' functions of the traffic commissioner to limit an operator to the number of vehicles he can run safely and responsibly (which may, in the worst circumstances, be nil).

While I can accept that, I am far from convinced the same argument can be sustained where a purely punitive sanction is imposed by a traffic commissioner on top of a fine for the same offence, or series of offences, by a court. That would seem to be two sets of penalty for one offence. It, therefore, seems to me that, either we need a change in primary legislation to clearly and unequivocally allow commissioners to impose a secondary penalty, or we need to return the powers to impose penalties (as opposed to control measures) back to the courts and to the courts alone. CBW

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M.O.T. 30th November 1996

1989 (February) LEYLAND TIGER 6TL 11 ENGINE DUPLE 320

57 reclining seats, grey/red moquette, power entrance door, tinted side windows, (ZF 6 speed gearbox) finished all white.
M.O.T. 13th March 1997.

1989 (April) DENNIS JAVELIN 12M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200

53 reclining seats, brown/red, orange, yellow chevron moquette, courier seat, tinted side windows, power entrance door, drop driver, finished white/silver/red/black.
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1987 (April) TOYOTA OPTIMO

19 seats red striped moquette, tinted side windows, power operated entrance door, finished all white.
M.O.T. March 1997

1987 (May) BOVA FUTURA FHD 12M

49/53 reclining seats, brown/orange/yellow moquette, courier seat, centre sunken demountable toilet with continental door, drinks machine, tinted double glazed windows, power operated entrance door, finished cream/red/yellow.
M.O.T. 18th February 1997

1985 (April) DAF SB2300 12M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200

53 reclining seats grey/red moquette, tinted side windows, curtains, power operated entrance door, finished all white.
M.O.T. 27th March 1997

1984 (April) LEYLAND TIGER 12M DUPLE CARIBBEAN

46 reclining seats, brown/orange moquette, rear offside sunken toilet with continental door, rear servery, double glazed tinted side windows, power operated entrance door, courier seat, semi-automatic gearbox, finished cream.
M.O.T. 10th February 1997

1983 (February) LEYLAND TIGER 12M DUPLE CARIBBEAN

46 reclining seats, brown/orange moquette, rear offside sunken toilet with continental door, rear servery, double glazed tinted side windows, power operated entrance door, semi automatic gearbox, finished cream.
M.O.T. 27th January 1997

1983 (May) LEYLAND TIGER 12M DUPLE CARIBBEAN

46 reclining seats, brown/orange moquette, courier seat, rear offside sunken toilet with continental door, rear servery, double glazed tinted side windows, power operated entrance door, semi-automatic gearbox, finished all white
M.O.T. 18th July 1996

1983 (June) VAN HOOL ASTRON (MAN) 12M

60 reclining seats (Recent re-trim), holdsworth brown, graffiti moquette, courier seat, drivers berth, wired forTV/Video, drinks machine, toilet, tinted side windows, curtains, power operated entrance door, finished all white.
M.O.T. February 1997

1982 (June) LEYLAND TIGER 12M DUPLE GOLDLINER IV

49 reclining seats, brown/orange moquette, courier seat, rear continental door, tinted double glazed side windows, power operated entrance door with peage window, rear offside sunken toilet, drinks machine, crew compartment, finished cream/maroon.
M.O.T. 7th March 1997

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Home base

CENTREWEST'S incursion into south east London highlights the difficulty of establishing a new bus depot quickly to service tenders in alien territory. Having flirted with a possible site in Foots Cray, the sands of time no doubt dictated the use of the long-closed, elderly Swanley bus garage to start operation from the due date last December. Under threat of demolition for housing development and some distance from the routes, this stop-gap measure has now — some months later — been replaced by a more permanent base.

Located in the industrial area of the town which gives the buses their fleetname it is not exactly a million miles from another (now former) depot — Stagecoach Selkent's displaced midibus Roundabout operation.

Having twice been reopened to serve new tenders, if another operator in the future should think of using Swanley garage he might well find net curtains, rather than access doors, gracing the London Road frontage.

No defence, your honour

LAST week's national television news gave a lot of free exposure to FirstBus subsidiary Midland Red West, as one of its coaches was seen for a good 30 to 40 seconds taking an unfortunate defendant to the Birmingham Crown Court.

Even though the shiny A-registered coach was not one of the expensive executive vehicles, it did offer a glamorous alternative to the Group 4 prison vans that are now in service all over the country.

Given that MRW has recently refurbished some of its coaches, and the Midland Red Coaches fleetname featured prominently in newsreel footage, the news piece should bring in some useful bookings, we hope!

But then why, when the coach was so obviously well turned out, did someone forget to add the wheeltrims?

Its an aspect of coach presentation that is regularly overlooked and, in this case, the sight of unprotected black wheels completely dented the shiny image of a vehicle that was over ten years old.

Keeping in trim? MRW has only recently refurbished

For one of the UK's mega groups, this kind of attention to detail is highly unprofessional.

Just think how much more presentable a 13-year-old Leyland Tiger could become with the simple addition of four chrome wheeltrims.

CBW

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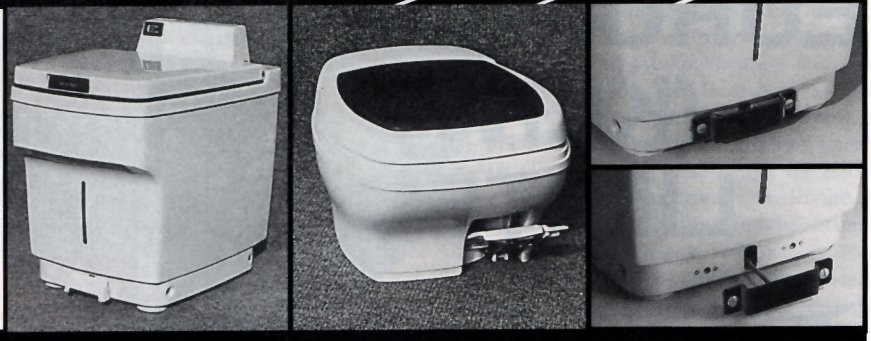
Also shown here is the new Bradtech, easy to fit, 'Drain Valve Lock' for the Thetford Electra-Magic toilet, designed to comply with Department of Transport regulations.



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SJ CARLTON

SECOND TO NONE

SJ SUPERDEAL

Scania Elite K113 Plaxton Paramount 3500
1992, 7 speed manual GR801 comfort shift gearbox, ABS, road speed governor, variable top speed limiter, exhaust brake, kneel facility, ferry lift, autolube, electric retarder, Webasto heating, inswinging entrance door. Central continental door, centre toilet, half rear emergency door, 3 roof vents, forced air ventilation, aircraft lockers, crew compartment, grey moquette, 49 reclining seats, centre gangway carpet, double glazed, side curtains, rear curtains, side blinds, aluminium wheels, Blaupunkt radio / PA system.
MOT 13.09.96

SJ SUPERDEAL

SOLD

Volvo B10M Mk [illegible] Alizee
1990, ZF 6 sp[illegible] S6[illegible]nual gearbox, Telma Retarder, autolube, fer[illegible]t, road[illegible]eed governor, variable top speed limiter, [illegible]ebasto heating, plug front entrance do[illegible] continental door, half rear emergency door, centre t[illegible] crew compartment, 3 roof vents, forced air ve[illegible]hringhausen drivers seat, courier seat, 49 recli[illegible] seats, brown moquette, double glazed, side blinds, rear curtains, radiomobile radio / PA system.
MOT 01.10.96

SJ SUPERDEAL

Scania K112 Plaxton 4000
1985, 72 reclining seats, courier seat, toilet, drinks.
MOT 28.01.97

SJ SUPERDEAL

Leyland Tiger Plaxton 3500
1984, 6 speed ZF gearbox, 49 reclining seats, O/S/R sunken toilet, O/S/R continental door, drinks, fridge, radio, PA
M.O.T. 06.96

SJ SUPERDEAL

Volvo B10M Mk II Van Hool Alizee
1989, 273 BHP, ZF 6 speed S690 manual gearbox, Telma retarder, exhaust brake, autolube, road speed governor, variable top speed limiter, ferry lift, plug entrance door, half rear emergency exit, double glazed side windows with blinds, rear screen curtains, Ishringhausen drivers seat, courier seat, 53 reclining seats, brown moquette, radiomobile radio / PA system, 3 roof air vents, forced air ventilation. Choice of 6 blue moquette.
Variable MoTs

SJ SUPERDEAL

Volvo B10M Mk III Van Hool Alizee
1991, 273 BHP, ZF HP5000 automatic gearbox, internal retarder, ABS, road speed governor, variable top speed limiter, autolube, ferry lift, kneel facility, plug entrance door, centre continental door, half rear emergency exit, double glazed side windows with blinds, rear screen curtains, Ishringhausen drivers seat, courier seat, crew compartment, 49 reclining seats, **lap belts**, brown/orange moquette, mid section servery / fridge, toilet, radiomobile radio / PA system, 2 roof air vents, forced air ventilation. Choice of 2 brown / orange.
Variable MOTs

SJ SUPERDEAL

DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee
1989, 49 seats, Webasto, drivers bunk, double glazing, foot rests, seat back nets, water boiler, fridge, curtains, carpets, wired for TV and video, sunken centre toilet, continental door.
MOT 09.12.96

SJ SUPERDEAL

Setra Tornado 215 HD
1992, MAN engine, ZF 7 speed gearbox, Voith retarder, 49 reclining seats & courier seat, sunken centre toilet with continental door, Webasto heating, Surtrak air conditioning, servery unit with water boiler, front mounted fridge, radio / PA / cassette system, 2 TV monitors and video, drivers bunk, drivers door with wardrobe and central locking.
MOT 06.12.96

SJ SUPERDEAL

Leyland Tiger 260 Duple 340
1987, 48 reclining seats, O/S/R/ sunken toilet, O/S/R continental door, TV / video, courier seat, blue stripe moquette, exterior 2 tone metallic grey.
M.O.T. 22.03.97

SJ SUPERDEAL

Volvo B10M Jonckheere P90
1983, 58 reclining seats plus courier, TV / video.
M.O.T. 22.03.97

SJ SUPERDEAL

Leyland Tiger L10
1989, Alexander service bus bodies, Cummins L10 ZF automatic, 55 seats & 24 standees, painted white.
MOT 30.08.96

SJ UPDATE

New Neoplan Deals
from immediate stock or new build

Neoplan Skyliner
V8 Twin Turbo Mercedes 381 BHP
77 seats and crew - air conditioning

Neoplan Cityliner
V8 Twin Turbo Mercedes 381 BHP
49/50 seats and crew - air conditioning

Neoplan Jetliner
Mercedes V6 290 BHP
35 seats and crew - air conditioning

Neoplan Transliner
Cummins GX 290 or GX 300 Euro II
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LETTER OF THE WEEK

This type of targeting by the VI is reprehensible

From Anon

We write to express our very real concern about the Vehicle Inspectorate Business Plan, particularly with regard to the target of numbers of prohibitions to be issued during the year. This puts a very real doubt about the fairness and impartiality of the VI, and we would cite two recent examples to illustrate this.

1. On a recent visit to one of our premises, a vehicle examiner inspected one coach and found it to be satisfactory except that a stop light was inoperative. While clearly that is a defect, it is not one which a driver can spot unless somebody tells him. Such a defect is usually only detected on a weekly inspection.

In the past, on finding such a defect, the inspector would issue a defect note or simply advise the fitter to sort it immediately — which we would do. On this occasion, a full immediate prohibition requiring clearance by full MoT inspection was issued. Can we expect more of this under the new regime, particularly if the numbers are down?

2. We are considering changes and improvements to our Vehicle Inspection Reports and, as we enjoy a good relationship with one of our area examiners, would wish to discuss our proposals with him — we have always found the VI to be most helpful in this regard. We know this particular examiner finds the targets to be wrong in concept and we are inclined to continue to accept his advice. Picture though, the scene later in the year if prohibition numbers are down for whatever reason and a vehicle inspector is under pressure to up his rate. Would he then give best advice or would he give the advice that is most likely to improve his rate of prohibition issue?

We think this type of targeting is reprehensible and this business plan should be scrapped now before the confidence of the industry is lost totally.

Name and address supplied

Write to: The Editor
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Letter of the week wins a Corgi Classics model bus

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Practice not illegal

From Lawrence Hailstone

Concerning the letter from Mr Knight about the school signs (*CBW*, 27 April). Yes, I leave my school signs in most of the time. I also transport mentally-handicapped adults and, when crossing the road, they need the same protection from the yob in the XR3 who thinks the only place for the right foot is in the carpet, as do W I members and OAPs. There is no law against leaving the signs in. We have all had cars pull out in front of us from side streets. Anything that helps warn them it is a passenger vehicle is a good thing. Next we will have people saying the third lane ban is a good idea. Let's put passengers' safety first.

Lawrence Hailstone
Hailstone Travel
Basildon
Essex

A knee-jerk reaction

From Michael Taplin

Unfortunately Steven Knight has got it wrong in his letter about school bus signs (*CBW*, 27 April). Operators who affix them permanently to their vehicles are not flouting the law.

When the regulations were out to consultation organisations such as ATCO (Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers) could see what would happen and urged the Government to make it an offence to display the sign when not carrying children. Unfortunately, since the whole business was just a knee-jerk political reaction to pressures arising from the school transport safety debate, the Department of Transport was not particularly interested in the practicalities of implementing the regulations.

Do I see the same thing coming with seatbelts? When is a coach not a coach? When it's a bus of course!

Michael Taplin
Chairman
ATCO South West
Gloucester

BTTF was worst yet

From Norma Barks

I was surprised to read the report that BTTF was the best yet (*CBW*, 6 April). I and many others would vote it the worst yet. Narrow aisles where you had to squeeze past anyone looking or talking to an exhibitor. Tiny stands where there wasn't room to stand inside, hence the aisle blockage. And Why? There was no shortage of available space and unused stands, and half the hall was empty. With all the unused space the only extra modest cost for wider aisles would have been for carpeting. Stand holders said the reason for the small stands was generally the cost of space — many times more expensive than Coach & Bus 95 at the same venue. If this show is to survive it certainly needs a drastic rethink of its strategy.

Norma Barks
Maun International
Sutton-in-Ashfield
Notts

Stop the squealing

From Len Wright (Norwich)

Oh dear, oh dear, so the "big boys" and the CPT are already "squealing" over the TGWU handout on drivers' working conditions. Why? (*CBW*, 13 April). Instead of complaining of the unfairness of it all what they should be doing — if they have nothing to hide — is to encourage the travelling public to ask the drivers questions about their conditions. The voluble protest just plays into the TGWU hands. Perhaps all the "complaining" parties concerned should read the letters from 'Disillusioned Driver' and 'The Lone Ranger' published in the same issue. These will prove the point that all is far from well in the passenger transport industry.

Len Wright
New Costessey
Norwich

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Sweet fift

Neoplan started the 15-metre age

WHEN the day finally dawns and 15-metre coaches are legalised on British roads, operators will be spoilt for choice.

Most of the leading European manufacturers are building new-length coaches for the German, Dutch, Belgian and East European markets that have already legalised them.

The one crumb of comfort for British operators, currently faced with nothing between a 12-metre single decker and a double decker, is that they can expect any minor bugs to have been ironed out by the time Whitehall finally concedes the case for three more metres and the additional seating capacity and/or legroom that will come with them.

Bova entered the 15-metre market back in 1993

It's often forgotten that the best-selling Volvo B10M has been available in 15-metre form since not long after its launch in 1979. Sweden led the way in permitting 15-metre vehicles and long B10Ms have been operating intercity services there since 1980. With Volvo talking confidently of having a Euro 3 ultra-low emission, mid-engined coach for the turn of the century, there's no reason to suppose that this popular model will miss out on a market already being tapped by the rear-engined B12.

Despite that Swedish leadership, longer coaches have only been permitted more widely in Europe over the past three years. Ironically, although 15-metre coaches are being promoted by campaigners in Britain as a lower-cost alternative to double-deckers, the new age began with the development of Neoplan's Megaliner - the four-axle, twin-steer version of the Skyliner decker.

Neoplan has since produced a 180-passenger Megashuttle bus version which first saw the light of day in former East Germany, and has followed it with three-axle single-deckers, the Cityliner coach and Megatrans bus.

The other leading German manufacturers have since begun building longer coaches for Europe. Within the Evobus stable, both Mercedes-Benz and Setra build vehicles over 12 metres. The three-axle Setra S217HDH is really a European version of a coach it already builds for the North American market; its 13.65 metres may sound a curious intermediate length until you translate it into the imperial measurement of 45 feet.

Mercedes has developed a 15-metre version of the 0404, a model still not available yet in any right-hand-drive

'een

Fifteen-metre coaches look set to be running on British roads by the end of the year (*CBW*, 6 April). In the second part of our investigation, Alan Millar takes a look at what's on offer in Europe

market at 12 metres; its third, trailing axle can either be steered for better manoeuvrability or else kept rigid.

MAN's 15-metre 24.420 HOCLN, launched at last year's Kortrijk show with a 400hp engine typical of many extra-long coaches, has a hydraulically-steered axle. But Germany's initial leadership in new-length coaches seems to have been rapidly overtaken by Dutch and Belgian builders, whose home markets have embraced the new concept with greatest enthusiasm.

Bova was first in the market in 1993 with 15-metre version of the Futura, the 15.430, and followed this up last year with the 69-seat FLD 15.370 Futura Magnum, a 3.3-metre high commuter coach version whose relatively low height emphasises the great apparent length of these vehicles.

Bova's approach to the extra length has been to build most of it into the front overhang, on the premise that drivers are better able to minimise damage at that end of the coach; the rear overhang is largely the same as on a 12-metre Bova.

DAF Bus followed Bova with its 428hp SBR3015, a WS 315l-engined derivative of the popular 12-metre SB3000; it has a self-steer trailing axle which steers at slow speeds, but locks into straight-ahead position above 25km/h or when reversing.

Berkhof builds the 13.7-metre Excellent 3000.15 body on the SBR3015, as well as offering lower cost, shorter new-length coaches – a two-axle 13.5-metre coach and a 13-metre double-decker with eight extra seats.

Stricter British axle weight limits have already deterred Volvo from selling two-axle 12-metre B12s and the coach version of the B10B in Britain, so there would have to be a major change of heart before lower cost, new-length coaches like the Berkhofs were permitted on this side of the Channel.

Berkhof's Belgian subsidiary, Jonckheere, is also well experienced in building longer coaches, both on the long-established Deauville range and now also on the new Mistral unveiled last Autumn. Its most innovative offerings are 3.7-metre high, 14.8-metre Deauville 65.15s on three-axle Volvo B12T chassis.

Instead of re-engineering the chassis, Jonckheere has built an extension behind the rear engine, creating a mammoth boot with walk-in access to the engine. Combined with the side lockers in the main wheelbase, this gives this new-length coach a potentially class-leading luggage capacity which greatly overcomes one of the weak points of double-deck coaches, which often have problems accommodating many pieces of luggage when all 70-plus seats are occupied.

Jonckheere has supplied at least one of these unconventional coaches to Russia for intercity services, and also bodies 13.5-metre, two-axle B12 models with normal rear overhangs. Van Hool, like Setra an experienced player in the 45ft American market, has developed 13.5-metre versions of its T800 and EOS 233 integral ranges; an advantage of this length is that 57 seats can be accommodated with legroom normally only available for 53 passengers on a 12-metre coach. It could well be that British operators treat today's 12-metre maximum length as an artificial limit and buy 13.5-metre and 15-metre vehicles when the rules change.

While most of these manufacturers can be expected to develop right-hand-drive versions for Britain when the length limit is raised, don't despair for the chances of British coach manufacturers.

Certainly, Dennis has indicated it is part of the way towards being able to satisfy British demand with a longer Javelin. Last year, it unveiled a 12.6-metre three-axle model for New Zealand, where axle weight limits are more restrictive than here. It says a longer Javelin could easily be developed when the need arises.

CBW **Dennis has moved towards longer coaches**

M
vc

Tale of the century: Dennis' new Arrow double decker can accommodate 100 passengers

DENNIS has got straight to the heart of the economics of double-deck bus operation with its new Arrow. It gives an alternative to the cheaper and more economical full-size single deckers capable of carrying around 70 passengers by offering operators a very good reason for paying extra for a more vulnerable and less-accessible top deck.

By aiming to maximise revenue for double-deck bus operators Dennis believes its Arrow can hit the target. How does a vehicle accommodating 100 passengers grab you - up to 84 of them seated?

Taking the design philosophy which characterises its current range of vehicles – Javelin, Dart and Lance — the Arrow uses low-weight, high-strength chassis construction for greater payload potential. In contrast with its predecessor, the long-running Dominator, its steel frame is welded and designed for optimum strength while reducing unnecessary weight. It follows the Dennis belief that weight need not be synonymous with strength.

By careful design, lower weight pays dividends for the operator in terms of reduced cost and better fuel economy. Conventional engineering wisdom points to a saving of one mpg for every tonne.

Our test bus with 95-passenger Northern Counties Palatine II bodywork proved the point with the 10.5-metre vehicle weighing in at less than 10.5 tonnes and returning 8.82 mpg compared with 7.47 mpg for an 11,360 kg bus on a previous *CBW* road test.

In a further link with its cousins produced in the Guildford plant, the Arrow has rear-engined 'T'-drive transmission, comprising in-line Cummins Euro 2 engine driving through ZF gearbox to Eaton rear axle. It's the

laking a lid point

Legislative changes forced on double-deck buses have resulted in heavier vehicles carrying fewer passengers but the new Dennis Arrow aims to reverse the trend. Mike Morgan takes to the road to see if the Lance-derived bus is on target

same arrangement that powers the Lance single deck and its super-low-floor SLF derivative.

And the Javelin also uses C-series Cummins/ZF though, in this case, the engine is mid mounted while the hot-selling rear-engined Dart harnesses the smaller B-series and Allison gearbox.

As Dennis bus & coach sales director, Roger Heard, explained, the principle for all models remains the same: "A simplified driveline gets weight out."

In the double-deck application the concept represents something of a breakthrough. The competition — Volvo Olympian, Scania N113 and DAF Bus DB250 — lean on transverse transmissions requiring an angle-drive while power plants (except DAFs 6.25-litre unit) are almost universally wedded to large 10 or 11-litre engines.

Not since Dennis' excursion into the exotic ill-fated Falcon of the early 1980s has the bus world seen a double-deck service bus using the Arrow's direct approach.

An analogy with the Falcon is only raised to highlight the potential benefits of the configuration. In all other respects the Mercedes-Benz-engined Falcon is best forgotten.

However, this reminder of the past hovered at the NEC when the first of the new-generation decker was displayed on the Dennis stand last October. Although then badged as a Lance, it was fitting that the buyer of the first Falcons, Nottingham City Transport, should also buy the first Arrow.

London & Country is a second buyer for the newcomer and is in the process of taking delivery of its first 10 - all with East Lancs bodywork (*CBW*, 20 April), contrasting with the Northern Counties interpretation of the Arrow theme.

Both bodybuilders have strived to exploit the Arrow's accommodating virtues.

By taking the single-deck Lance chassis as a starting point, Dennis has forced bodybuilders to introduce two steps in the lower saloon gangway. But, to balance this disadvantage, it offers the possibility of all-forward facing seats over the rear raised chassis section with seats going further back in the saloon than a conventional decker with engine across the rear.

However, headroom is reduced to a minimum giving 5ft 10in in the test bus and the Arrow cannot be offered in anything less than highbridge standards, despite a cunning recess in the lower saloon roof line giving a three-inch reduction on the East Lancs-built examples.

Our test pointed the Arrow along roads familiar on previous CBW road tests with Dennis buses — Lance SLF and tri-axle Dragon for Hong Kong.

Dennis Way, Guildford was the start and finish point, with a good mix of driving in between.

Park Farm estate with its rash of speed tables challenged the suspension. Town centre Guildford and Farnham tested stop-start characteristics, and the open road was approached over the Hogs Back, witness to many a Dennis test vehicle of days gone by.

Qualified praise was reserved for the wide entrance leading to 900 mm throat over the GKN front axle. Whereas East Lancs had maximised the potential with neat GRP moulded dash and cab door, the Northern Counties solution retained the intrusive box that would otherwise conceal a radiator on other manufacturers' chassis.

Arrow's radiator is at the rear with hydraulic fan and side air-intake, so what was being hidden? The batteries. Yes, to distribute weight over the front axle this is where they were located, accessed from the front by a hinged/lift-out centre panel.

An industry standard 320 mm first step followed by 200 mm second offered no significant obstacle for boarding or alighting though, as low-floor becomes more common, passengers may start to resist and call for something more than the optional kneeling suspension. However, that could be confronted in the next phase of Dennis' bus chassis development.

Downstairs the high ceiling in the front half of the bus gave it an inviting ambience which only becomes marginally claustrophobic when dark-covered highback seats are specified. Even with maximum lower-deck seating (35) legroom was generous. Venturing up the forward-ascending staircase offered a few surprises. The test bus had two pairs of seats squeezed ahead of it. Restricted legroom for these seats was exacerbated by trunking for the driver's fresh air blower which, though excellent for the driver, who is treated to a welcome stream of controllable fresh air from vents above the screen, is unnecessarily intrusive for the passengers.

A further mystery was at the rear, ▶▶▶

Arrow's entrance has two steps

Mystery locker at rear on top deck

where a very large locker approximating in size to that covering the engine downstairs, held nothing more than a few wires and the air intake for the engine.

Throughout the bus noise levels were commendably low. Mind you, the Cummins engine does not require encapsulation to meet driveby noise levels.

The *CBW* decibel meter hovered close to class-beating scores as the only intrusion came from the gearbox as it went about its business.

Other than the prototype built for the show, this was the first opportunity to examine the Arrow at close quarters and the first chance to take one on the road. And, as the bow was pulled-back and the Arrow released, the first impressions were that the new vehicle was on target, with its smooth, refined ride quality — no pitch, no roll — and very quiet performance.

Careful tuning of chassis components has ironed out any unpleasant ride or noise characteristics. Throughout the test the Arrow was a very pleasant vehicle to travel in. It could be cornered at a fairly high speed; braked without drama and accelerated like a good 'un.

'Without doubt Dennis has established a lead that injects new interest into the double-deck market. Whether others follow remains to be seen'

The 8.6-litre 245 bhp engine relies on the UK bus industry coming to terms with a relatively modest size of engine producing peak power at 2,200 rpm and maximum torque at 1,400 rpm, though the concept has been successfully applied in other vehicles and it did not feel or sound stressed. On the contrary its torque characteristics accounted for an impeccable performance - nippy but without racetrack pretensions.

Two steps in lower saloon aisle

The cab on our test Arrow was a mix of good and bad. It had excellent steering column adjustment, placing the wheel just where required but Dennis has yet to decide which size of steering wheel to fit as standard. Should it be the small-diameter one familiar on the Dart or the larger wheel fitted on all its other PSV chassis except Dragons for Citybus in Hong Kong?

After our test of the Dragon last year CBW praised the smaller wheel, so we were first to try out the 'small wheel is best' theory on the Arrow. For driver comfort and control it has our vote. Even if steering is a touch heavy at low speeds, there is a reassuring firmness in all other situations.

Instrumentation follows the Dennis 'keep-it-simple' approach. What you need is what you get and the test bus had a good relationship between door control, gear selection and handbrake on the off side. Control of the bus, visibility of passengers in both saloons and when boarding or alighting was very good. There are no annoying reflections and all the instrumentation and switches are clearly labelled, sensibly clustered and immediately to hand.

The deep Northern Counties windscreen allowed excellent forward vision and was complemented by well-positioned mirrors and central periscope. The spacious cab even had a coat peg, but the driver's seat was off-centre and left-leg room restricted by superfluous radiator casing.

Once on the move the Arrow is as much a pleasure to drive as it is to ride in. Relationship between accelerator and footbrake is ideal and the in-built retarder reassuring. It's the next bit that needs some practice - a comfortable stop as retarder, gearbox and drum brakes each do their bit, needing the driver to harness the three sources of stopping power.

A spin-off from the lightweight chassis was anticipated improved fuel economy. Overall consumption on test was almost 9 mpg which, for a 10,280 kg bus able to carry 95 people, is a good result, stressing Roger Heard's confidence that the company's efforts to reduce vehicle operating costs will appeal to operators.

However, the Arrow is only available in one length — 10.5 metres — and cannot be adapted to lowbridge bodywork. Around the leafy lanes of Guildford trees had to be watched carefully and, although nippy and with five-metre wheelbase, its length does make it less manoeuvrable than a bus one metre shorter.

Without doubt Dennis has established a lead that injects new interest into the double-deck market. Whether others follow remains to be seen and could well depend on growth in this sector of the new bus league tables. However, there's a logic pointing to more efficient, economical operation that is difficult to ignore. CBW

SPECIFICATION

Chassis:	Dennis Arrow
Body:	Northern Counties Palatine II
Engine:	8.3-litre turbo-charged/after-cooled six-cylinder Cummins C-series
Power:	245 bhp (180 kW) @ 2,200 rpm
Torque:	756 Lbf ft (1025 Nm) @ 1,400 rpm
Gearbox:	ZF 4HP 500 four-speed automatic with integral retarder
Steering:	ZF 8095 hydraulic power assisted - height and rake adjustable column
Brakes:	full air front and rear front: drums rear: drums
Handbrake:	spring release
Retarder:	hydraulic, built into gearbox operated by foot brake
Suspension:	full air
Drive axle:	Eaton single-reduction hypoid - ratio 4.88:1
Tyres:	275/70R x 22.5
Options:	ZF 5HP 500 E five-speed gearbox front suspension kneel air-conditioning drive left-hand drive

Excellent column adjustment

DIMENSIONS

Length:	10.5 metres
Width:	2.5 metres
Height:	4.46 metres (14ft 6in)
Wheelbase:	5.05 metres
Unladen weight:	10,280 kg
GVW:	16,800 kg

PERFORMANCE

Acceleration:	0-30 mph - 10.3 secs 0-40 mph - 16 secs 0-50 mph - not recorded
Fuel economy:	Average consumption - 8.82 mpg Total distance - 30 miles Fuel used - 3.4 gallons Range with 255-litre tank - 494 miles
Noise levels at 40 mph:	Cab - 71 dB(A), Lower saloon rear - 74 dB(A) Upper saloon average - 62 dB(A)

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1993
1994
1995
1996

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SJ CARLTON

Ireland's first Transliner arrives

Collins Coaches takes Dennis-chassied Neoplan shown at Coach & Bus 95

by Mike Morgan

THE first Neoplan Transliner to be delivered to Ireland is to Collins Coaches of Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan, which has taken the Dennis-chassied show vehicle displayed at Coach & Bus 95.

Owners Pat and Cora Collins are proud of this latest addition to their seven-coach fleet, which handles mainly incoming tourist work between March and November.

Pat Collins said the company liked every vehicle to be different, having bought a distinctively-liveried EOS last year. It buys new "every time."

He said: "We go for spectacular colours so the coach takes the limelight and Cora designed the name so that it complements the interior.

"The basic concept is to match inside and outside."

Collins started in 1979 doing a mix of local private hire and excursion work but, in 1988, it moved into luxury coaches and, in addition to incoming tourists, runs a scheduled daily service on the 55-mile route to Dublin and regular tours to England.

BERKHOF

Midi proves ideal vehicle

BENNETTS Coaches of Chievely has departed from its normal preference for Bovas to buy an MAN 11.190 midicoach with Berkhof Excellence 1000 body.

The Berkshire company, which had recently taken on extra work following the demise of Regis Coaches, has bought it for a contract with a tour company specialising in small groups and for its own small party group tours work. "We've noticed that more private groups with 25 or 30 people are booking with us and we've been coping with one of our 49-seat executives for that work," managing director Dick Bennett told *CBW*.

"We would have gone for a Bova if they did one that size, but we looked at the MAN, Volvo and Dennis and felt the MAN was best for us after listening to the comments of other operators. In particular, we went on the recommendation of Maurice Chivers of Clapton Coaches of Midsomer Norton, who bought one last year."

Bennetts specified the coach with 32 reclining seats, a floor-mounted toilet at the rear and Sutrak air conditioning and has fitted it with a drinks machine and fridge. It was also specified with a Telma retarder. "That was something we were advised to put on because of the smaller wheels," says Mr Bennett."

It's also the first coach in the 12-vehicle touring fleet to be fitted with a hearing aid loop. "It was built in by Berkhof and only cost £180."

OPTARE

MetroRiders oust Dodges

BRITISH Bus subsidiary West Riding of Wakefield is completing its Dodge minibus replacement programme with the purchase of four Optare MetroRiders for its Pontefract-based South Yorkshire Transport operation.

The 31 seaters take the total number of Optare vehicles in the combined group fleet to 57, and the Pontefract contingent to six. Prior to the company's acquisition in July 1994, no minibuses were operated, and the Dodge minis were drafted in from other group fleets. Much of the upgrading of the South Yorkshire fleet has been completed with the elimination of Daimler Fleetlines and coaches which were acquired with the business in 1994.

Apart from the six MetroRiders, the fleet has been updated by the transfer of Olympians and Nationals from the main West Riding fleet.

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VOLVO

1993 B10M GL VAN HOOL ALIZEE
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CHOICE AVAILABLE.

1993 B10M GL JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE 45L
50/53 Reclining Seats; Rear Continental Door; Crew Seat; Carpet; Curtains; R&PA; Webasto; Telma.

1993 B10M GL PLAXTON PREMIERE 350
49 Reclining Seats; Centre Toilet; Centre Continental Door; Boiler; R&PA

1992 VOLVO B10M GL PLAXTON EXCALIBUR
50/53 Reclining Seats; Rear Continental Door; Aircraft Lockers; Double Glazing; R&PA; Curtains; Carpet, Webasto; Telma; Brown/Gold trim.
CHOICE AVAILABLE

1993 VOLVO B10M GL VAN HOOL ALIZEE

50/53 Reclining Seats; Rear Continental Door;Carpet; Curtains; Double Glazing; R&PA; Webasto; Telma
CHOICE AVAILABLE

AVAILABLE SHORTLY

1992 VOLVO B10M GL - PLAXTON PREMIERE 350
48/49 Reclining Seats; Rear Continental Door; Rear Sunken Toilet; Double Glazing; R&PA; Curtains, Carpet; Webasto; Telma; Air Conditioning; Crew Seat.

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'88 DAF SB2300 CAETANO ALGARVE, 53 R + C, R/P/C

'88 SCANIA K112 VAN HOOL ALIZEE DH, 51 R + C, retarder, video/monitor, toilet

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'91 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON 3500, 51 R + C, toilet

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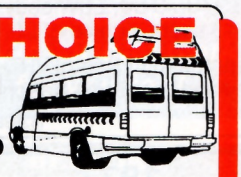

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1989 MERCEDES 308D, 15 seater.

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90 H TRANSIT, 16 diesel PSV.
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88 NEOPLAN, 77 seater, Merc V10 engine, ZF manual.
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88 MERC 23, coach spec.
88 TRANSIT 12, diesel, psv, swb.
88 MERC 609, coach spec, 23 seats.
88 TRANSIT, diesel, 11 psv, swb.
88 F MERCEDES 709, 21 seat, coach spec.
88 FREIGHT ROVER, 16, diesel, PSV coach spec.
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84 MAN VAN HOOL ASTRON, 61, toilet, TV
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1984 VOLVO B10M BERKHOF ESPRIT, 53 reclining seats, courier, radio/PA.....**£32,500**

1984 VOLVO B10 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 49 recliners, courier, centre demountable toilet/continental door, radio/PA.....**£34,500**

1983 VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE, 49 reclining seats, centre toilet, continental door, radio/PA.....**£32,500**

1983 A VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 49 reclining seats, courier seat, auto transmission, Webasto, d/glazed, boiler, fridge, wired for TV, test Aug '96.....**£32,500**

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1987 D Dodge S56, 25-seat bus, Reeve Burgess body, power door, brown interior, automatic gearbox, new MoT, very good condition, recent respray in white, **£4,995.**

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1990 DAF SB2305 CAETANO ALGARVE, 53 recliners, crew seat, tinted side windows, Blaupunkt radio/tape/PA, interior brown, exterior cream/orange/green, MoT 22/1/97 ..... **£67,500**

1989 SCANIA K112 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 4000, double deck, 67 recliners, 2 crew seats, toilet, large fridge, Webasto, retarder, double glazing, radio/tape/PA, curtains, 4 tables, interior fawn, exterior white/red/yellow, MoT 30/5/96 ..... **£79,500**

1988 VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE P599, 51 recliners, crew seat, continental door, rear sunken toilet, double glazing, power door, fawn interior, exterior mauve/white. MoT 22/3/97 ..... **£69,500**

1986 LAG PANORAMIC, 49 recliners, crew seat, double glazing, centre sunken toilet, continental door, hot water boiler, fridge, 2 monitors, Webasto, Telma, interior grey/red, exterior cream/orange/brown, MoT 30/4/96 ..... **£44,950**

1985 BEDFORD YMP PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 9.7 metre, 35 recliners, power door, tinted windows, curtains, roof trim roof, interior grey/blue, exterior light grey/red/blue. MoT 11/1/97 ..... **SOLD**

1984 VOLVO B10M BERKHOF ESPRITE, 53 recliners, crew seat, curtains, moquette to centre roof, interior brown striped, exterior white/yellow/mauve, MoT 8/12/96 ..... **£32,500**

1984 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 49 recliners, crew seat, centre demountable toilet, centre continental door, radio/tape/PA, curtains, interior brown/red, exterior white/blue, MoT 26/5/96 ..... **£34,500**

1983 VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE, rebodied 1986, 49 retrimmed recliners, crew seat, centre continental door & toilet, Clarion radio/tape, power door, interior fawn, exterior white, MoT 29/6/96 ..... **£35,000**

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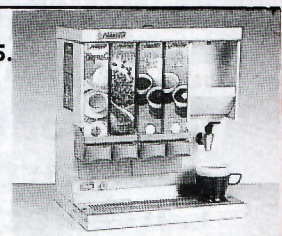

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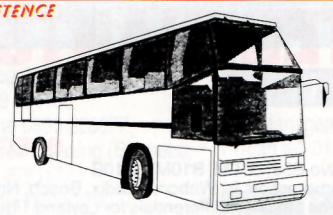

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South East 01293 525155
East Anglia 01603 788251
South Coast 01202 676040
South West 01454 620515
Wales 01792 790060
Midlands 0116 275 0271
North 0161 624 0025
Tyneside & Cumbria .. 0191 491 0529
Scotland South 0141 347 1066
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Actionform Ltd
Engine refurb.
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fax: 01902 22880

A.V.T., suppliers of in coach audio video and public address.
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B — B

Beral Brake Linings
Roadlink International
tel: 01902 636206

Belaco Ltd, Brake linings
tel: 01298 811236

Berkhof,Ave-Sales,Parts & Services tel: 01344 861

British Furtex Fabrics, suppliers of quality moquettes for Coach and Bus Industry tel: 01422 882161

Bryden Riveting Machines
Roadlink Int'
tel: 01902 636206

Buss Bizz, Vehicle spares
tel: 01962 715555/715566

Busparts, for windscreen, body and chassis parts
B/Ham: 0121-524-1200
Bristol: 0117-955 4955
London: 01932-569 177

Bus & Coach Glazing (Ware)
tel: 01920 485996
Freephone: 0800 220077

Bus & Coach Glazing (Anston)
tel: 01909 551188
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C — C

Carlyle parts for Van Hool windscreen, body & integral chassis parts. tel: 0121 524 1200

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Confederation of Passenger Transport UK tel: 0171 831 7546

Computer Systems and Software A.K.M. tel: 01270 250829

C.Anthony Wood & Co Accountants tel: 0181 866 8232

C.P.V. CONVERSIONS, Alpha-Tec. tel: 01132 329559

CCS 24hr Coach Mobile B/Down Svc tel: 0181 5617838

Coach Wash, Armchair Brentford tel: 0181 568 8227

Cornish-NW, Insurance
tel: 0151 5461282

D — D

Driver Seats: Thomas Scott & Co. tel: 0141 763120

DB. Associates Business Consultants tel: 01799 540513

Dennis Specialists Vehicles
tel: 01483 571271

Direct Parts tel: 01920 465946

E — E

Elite Services
Seatbelt specialists
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Engines, Preston Engines.
tel: 01772 651629

F — F

Fuel Management Equipment by Triscan tel: 01254 682111

G — G

Gary Smith, Spares and recovery
tel: 01789 267990

Gauntlet Insurance, Bus, Coach and Fleet Insurance
tel: 01132 448686

H — H

Hindle Auto for Engines and ZF Trans.
Tel: 01274 732284

I — I

Insurance, Robin Huckle and Co Ltd. tel: 0121 454 8878

K — K

KONI Shock Absorbers, Roadlink Int' tel: 01902 636206

Kirkby Coach and Bus
Sheffield tel: 01909 551166

Kernow Driving Serv.
tel: 01850 701450

L — L

Lockerbie P.S.V. Consultants. Agents for Onyx, Nutrack and Cacclamali.
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Leyland Engines, call Actionform! tel: 01902 714242

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Mobile Vehicle Lifts – Prolift
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MAN Truck & Bus UK Ltd
Swindon tel: 01793 490231

Mercedes Benz
(United Kingdom) Ltd
tel: 01908 24500

N — N

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R — R

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Registrations: National Numbers
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U — U

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WEDNESDAY 15TH MAY At 12 NOON

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Entries will include:

• EXECUTIVE COACHES • TOURING COACHES
• PSV MINIBUSES/MINICOACHES
• PSV STAGE BUSES • SERVICE BUSES (single and double deck)
• WELFARE BUSES

For a provisional listing of promised entries contact our Dial-A-Fax after **6pm on Friday 10th May.**

Buying or selling, please contact: John Connolly or Alex Ferneyhough on 0161 230 6000, (A57) Hyde Road, Belle Vue, Manchester.

DIAL-A-FAX 0336 413753

For a full list of vehicles or confirmation of their availability at this auction dial the above number on your fax machine and press start when indicated. (Calls charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p at all other times.)

ATTENTION: ALL NON ADT ACCOUNTS CUSTOMERS

All non-account customers must, WITHOUT EXEMPTION, lodge a minimum CASH or BANKERS DRAFT deposit of £500 or 10% of the final bid price (whichever the greater) PER VEHICLE to the auctioneer's rostrum at the time of sale. Please telephone Mrs P. Moffat – cashier, for further information regarding payment enquiries prior to sale day.

ADT Auctions

(62804/AUC)

01733 467144 Appointments & Tenders

London Transport bus services

London Transport Buses will shortly be inviting tenders for the operation of the following London Transport bus routes.

54	West Croydon - Woolwich
75	West Croydon - Lewisham

These routes will be tendered on the basis of net cost contracts.

If you are interested and have already submitted your pre-qualification documents then you need take no further action at this stage. However if you are interested and have not completed London Transport's pre-qualification system for bus service tendering then you must do so by 22nd May 1996 in order to receive invitations to tender for the above routes.

Pre-qualification documents are available by writing to:

Mr T Wynne
Buyer
London Transport Buses
172 Buckingham Palace Road
London SW1W 9TN
Telephone 0171 918 3812

London Transport Buses

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NEOPLAN DENNIS

(63067/APP)

Depot Manager,
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The successful applicant must possess a CPC and a PSV driving licence and will be responsible for Bus services, Driver and Vehicle scheduling, private hire and driver recruitment, selection and discipline.

Salary in the region of £13,000 to £17,000 (plus other benefits), depending on qualifications and experience.

Written applications and CV to Roger Jarvis, Managing Director, Blue Bus and Coach Services Ltd, Unit 4a, Horwich Business Park, Chorley New Road, Horwich, Bolton, BL6 5UE. Closing date 23 May 1996.

Depot Engineer,
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

We are seeking the above for this new appointment at our expanding Huddersfield operations.

The successful applicant is required to ensure the daily operation of maintaining our bus fleet to both company and DoT standards. The position would suit a hands on engineer with the drive to get things done. He/she will be responsible for ensuring vehicle cleanliness, control of stores and depot facilities.

Salary in the region of £13,000 to £14,000 pa depending on qualifications and experience.

Written applications and CV to James Hilton, Fleet Engineer at the above address. Closing date 23 May 1996

(62980/APP)

ASSURED PERFORMANCE GROUP LTD
Invite applicants for the new position of

TECHNICAL SUPPORT ENGINEER

The successful applicant will be a qualified engineer with recent hands-on experience of airbrake systems within the bus industry. A knowledge of ISO9002 systems would be an advantage. Reporting to the Engineering Director, you will be expected to liaise with customers to resolve technical queries and be responsible for improving technical awareness, within the company, particularly on new products.
A comprehensive remuneration package will be offered commensurate with experience.
A company car will be provided.
Applications by post including CV to:
The Managing Director, Assured Performance Group Ltd, Barnacre, Garstang, Lancashire PR3 1GD

(62975/APP)

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL
Department of Planning and Transportation

Tenders are invited for the provision of local bus services in the Breckland and North Norfolk areas of Norfolk commencing 28 July 1996 onwards.
Forms including full details are available on application to the Director of Planning and Transportation, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2SG, marked for the attention of the Public Transport Officer, and must be returned to the Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Solicitor not later than 2pm on Thursday, 23 May 1996.

COACH AND BUS WEEK
Classified Deadlines

Booking .....
.....TUESDAY 1600

Bookings requiring Proofs
.....MONDAY 1200

Cancellation .....
.....MONDAY 1200

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Appointments & Tenders

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You will supervise the planning, development and monitoring of Public and Education Transport Services, Infrastructure and the Council's Concessionary Fares Scheme. Duties include the day-to-day management of the unit ensuring that professional standards, productivity and performance levels are met.

Experience in information technology is essential as extensive use of computers is made within the unit.

Education to degree level is essential and additional Associate Membership of the Chartered Institute of Transport is desirable, alternatively, four years' relevant experience and possession of a Certificate of Professional Competence (Passenger Transport) will be considered. A current, full driving licence is essential.

Starting salary will be dependent on qualifications and experience.

Application forms and further details are available from the Personnel Department, Perth & Kinross Council, PO Box 77, 2 High Street, Perth PH1 5PH. Tel: 01738 475437(answering service)/475411.

Closing date 26 May 1996.

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY

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We are looking for somebody with experience of passenger transport scheduling, either with a major bus operator or in local authority environment. Alternatively, a transport related degree is required. You will have the ability to work to very tight deadlines without close supervision, and quickly assimilate information received from several sources. Communication skills are essential. Computing ability, together with a good geographical knowledge of the county would also be an advantage.

Application forms and further particulars are available from the Personnel Group, PO Box 43, Shire Hall, Warwick, CV34 4SX. Telephone 01926 412458.

Closing date Friday 31 May 1996

Interviews to be held 13 June 1996

Warwickshire County Council

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Key responsibilities include:

Supervision of the traffic and commercial departments
Board and management meeting participation
Annual budgets and budgetary control
Union negotiation and disciplinary action
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Driver scheduling and appropriate legislation
Development of an efficient network
Applying Flagship quality and training standards

Good communication and negotiating skills in addition to a thorough knowledge of operating practices are essential

Applications should be forwarded to

Ms L Goulding, Managing Director, Rider York Limited, York YO1 3DW by Friday 24 May 1996

A subsidiary of FirstBus plc

(62976/APP)

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WANTED

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Mr M. Davies
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24 Hatton Garden, Liverpool, L3 2AN
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(63082/TEN)

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▼ Coach

Pair join Moseley

Former Caetano men switch allegiance

by Mike Morgan

TWO former employees of Salvador Caetano (UK) have joined Moseley (PCV) of Doncaster.

Alan White, 37, moves in as area sales manager and **Peter Copperwheat**, 43, becomes works manager. Mr White's responsibilities cover south midlands, east Anglia and Greater London. He was employed by Salvador Caetano in a similar capacity for three years until February 1996 when he moved to Dennis Specialist Vehicles for a short time.

Previously he was with Jonckheere (UK) but had earlier qualified as a coachbuilder and worked for Merseyside Transport before progressing to workshop controller during an earlier spell with Salvador Caetano. Mr Copperwheat had also worked for Jonckheere UK, moving to Salvador Caetano as service manager when the company closed in April 1993.

Copperwheat: works chief

White: area sales manager

▼ Bus

First woman PTE director

LIZ GILLIARD has been appointed passenger services director with Centro and hopes to take up the post in June.

She is the first woman director appointed by any of the seven UK Passenger Transport Executives, which have been operating for 25 years.

Currently working as head of the light rail team at the Department of Transport in London, Ms Gilliard, 31, also has hands-on experience of public transport. Starting as a booking clerk on the London Underground she progressed through the administrative ranks before spending four years with transport consultants Steer Davies Gleave.

She said of her new appointment: "I am delighted to have been given this opportunity to have a real impact on local transport. Centro is a dynamic and effective PTE and I am sure I will enjoy working there. I am really looking forward to putting all my practical and public-sector experience to good use in this post."

▼ Bus

United Counties chief engineer

STAGECOACH United Counties at Northampton has appointed Kevin O'Leary, 34, its chief engineer. Mr O'Leary had previously worked for Crossville Motor Services (now Crossville Wales); Express Travel, where he was chief engineer; British Bus, for whom he was an engineering consultant; and Invictaway (Maidstone & District), where he had been fleet engineer for the last 10 months. Mr O'Leary, who only took up his post on 1 May, told *CBW* he anticipated no major problems in his new role. "Everything is hunky dory," he said.

CBW Coach and Bus Week
The PSV industry's news weekly

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UK	£121.00	£217.00	£308.00
Eire/Europe	1 year £164.00.	Airmail	1 year £196.00

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.
YOUR COMPANY DETAILS

1. What is your primary job title? (Tick one only)

Owner/Director ❒01
Senior/General Manager ❒02
Engineering/Service Manager ❒03
Other (please specify) ❒04

2. What is your company's main business function?

Bus Operator ❒01
Coach Operator ❒05
Coach & Bus Operator ❒02
Local Government ❒03
Other (please specify) ❒04

3. How many vehicles does your company own/operate? (Tick all that apply)

	Buses	Coaches
1-5	❒01	❒10
6-10	❒02	❒11
11-15	❒03	❒12
16-25	❒04	❒13
26-39	❒05	❒14
40-100	❒06	❒15
101-400	❒07	❒16
401-1000	❒08	❒17
1000+	❒09	❒18

4. Do you have responsibility for the recommendation/ purchase and/or specification of the following? (Tick all that apply)

	Pur	Spec	Rec
Vehicles	❒01	❒12	❒23
Parts/Spares	❒02	❒13	❒24
Oil/Fuel	❒03	❒14	❒25
Breakdown	❒04	❒15	❒26
Insurance/Finance	❒05	❒16	❒27
Fuel Cards	❒06	❒17	❒28
Training	❒07	❒18	❒29
Venue/Attraction Tickets	❒08	❒19	❒30
Ferry Crossing	❒09	❒20	❒31
Hotel Bookings	❒10	❒21	❒32
Theatre Tickets	❒11	❒22	❒33
Other (please specify)			❒34

5. What type of work does your company undertake? (Tick all that apply)

Private Hire ❒01
Day Excursions ❒02
British Tours ❒03
European Tours ❒04
Local Government Contracts ❒05
Emergency/Breakdown Services ❒06

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